

Governor's Advisory Council on Libraries – Minutes (Draft)

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 - Audioconference

1. Call to order

- Tracy called the meeting to order at approximately 3:20 PM (after brief technical difficulties).
- Present: Rosemary Austin, Amanda Bailey, Rebecca Brown, Kay Jabusch, Rachel Nash, Karen Petersen, Deborah Rinio, Ruth Terry, Arthur Walters, Patience Frederiksen (Ex-Officio), and Tracy Swaim (Coordinator/Minutes).

2. Selection of Meeting Moderator

- Rebecca Brown volunteered to be Meeting Moderator. Yay!

3. Changes/Additions to Agenda

- There were no changes or additions to the Agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes of the April 9, 2019 meeting approved by unanimous consent. Rose/Ruth

5 Public Comments

- No comments; however, a question about how the public is notified about this meeting arose. It was the consensus that advertising this meeting on **AkLA-L** would be good. BTW, to join the [Alaska Library Association mailing list, go to https://akla.org/join/mailling-lists/](https://akla.org/join/mailling-lists/). *You do not need to be a member to join this informational mailing list and traffic is not high.*

6. GAC Mailing List

- Tracy described the new GAC Mailing List. Members can communicate with each other as a group with this tool. A simple "reply" responds to only the sender of a message, and "reply all" sends to the entire group.

7. News from IMLS and Alaska.

- Patience describe the IMLS reauthorization process which has in the past is added, then zeroed-out, then added back in. It is OK...for now. The good news is that the base amount we receive has been increased by about \$50,000 to, roughly, one million dollars.

- Covid-19 is definitely impacting libraries. There is talk that the IMLS may try to increase funding to provide additional resources to expand Internet access. These “extra” funds could be focused on such things as buying hotspots or increasing data plans in needed areas
- Discussion followed about the concepts in the article “Presumption of the Connected”.
- Telework/telestudy is becoming the new norm. However, there are definitely Internet and Hardware deficits in Alaska for kids and adults. What can be done for those who do not have computers?
- In Kenai the school district is canvassing all families of students to assess and meet and fulfill the computer needs of each.
- The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is having weekly audioconferences with superintendents.
- We are changing the way we do internet.

8. Review of FY2020 grants awarded

- Some vendors are providing free resources during this crisis on [SLED \(such as Tumblebooks and Ebsco Ebooks\) http://sled.alaska.edu](http://sled.alaska.edu)
- Steve Rollins and Mary Jo Torgeson have been working with Sen. Begich to provide two additional positions for the Alaska Library Catalog and \$400k for SLED. We will see what happens.
- A question from the group: How can we “advise” the Governor or Legislature? Can the group write a letter or make a resolution. Patience asked Tracy to contact Boards and Commissions to see what is appropriate/legal. In the meantime, members could connect with the AkLA Advocacy Committee as individuals.
- Tracy highlighted the small grant (\$5,000) **Fighter in Velvet Gloves** (Alaska Civil Rights Hero Elizabeth Peratrovich by Annie Boochever) project which partnered with the Juneau League of Women Voters to purchase and mail 450+ books to libraries around the state.

9. Trends, needs, and “advisory” from YOUR perspective

- Kay pointed out that more organizations want to partner with their friends of the library group such as the Census, local schools, projects like 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, substance abuse agencies. There seems to be more need for the library than ever.

- Rose commented on the future loss of revenue for communities and “how to be engaged” when libraries are closed. How will communities keep going and how will public libraries without a physical space? The digital divide is more apparent than ever.
- Rebecca discussed how a children’s librarian has contacted publishers to waive copyright to be able to read books online for story times. Rachel humorously mentioned that toddlers seem to be more focused during the online readings than in person! ☺
- Patience brought up the problem of people losing jobs and critical financial turmoil within communities. Libraries need to think about how they can help people make it through this. Libraries did help during the 2008 downturn in Alaska; however, this is different in that there are three major factors all at once: low tourism (cruises, Mt. Marathon, flight restrictions, etc.), low oil prices (\$25/barrel rather than \$45-65), and strain to the health infrastructure. Libraries could offer services to retool skills, update resumes, and other employment services.
- Arthur illustrated how Seward will be severely financially impacted by this in that a large portion of Seward’s economy is based on tourism, specifically the Mt. Marathon race and the Fourth of July celebration.
- What can the library offer for kids with nothing to do...or adults?
- Are there any statewide story time, lecture, or training videoconferences available or libraries who would be willing to share with the smaller, rural libraries?

10. Adjournment

- Meeting ended at about 4:15 PM by unanimous consent. Rose/Arthur

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